

Public Hearing for Town Meeting Warrant Articles 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 & 21

Arlington Redevelopment Board
March 18, 2019



Introduction to Articles



Master Plan Public Feedback

- Encourage new housing in mixed use properties along commercial corridors by allowing increased density.
- Encourage housing with a mix of unit sizes for varying household sizes.
- Encourage new residential development affordable to a mix of incomes, including middle income households.
- Focus dense development along commercial corridors.

Preliminary Draft Recommendations for Housing (Housing and Economic Development Committee, 5/30/2014)



Master Plan Survey Feedback

- Mixing housing, workplaces, shops and other uses can be a benefit to owners, users and residents.
- One story buildings in business districts are a poor use of space. Build up, not out.
- The cost of parking is often the greatest hindrance to the economic feasibility of dense, urban developments.
- Allowing increased density through infill housing and conversion to multi-unit dwellings, relaxing off-street parking requirements, etc. in areas close to commercial areas.

Written survey responses 11/3/2014-12/2/2014



Relation to Master Plan

Master Plan Recommendations (p.43-44)

- Promote development of higher value mixed-use buildings by providing redevelopment incentives in all or selected portions of the business districts on Mass Ave, Broadway, and Medford Street.
- Support vibrant commercial areas by encouraging new mixed-use redevelopment.
- Establish parking ratios that reflect actual need for parking.
- Amend on-site open space requirements for certain uses in business districts to promote high value redevelopment and alternative green areas such as roof gardens.

How Amendments Address

Amendments unlock development potential of business districts and build on the previous amendments for mixed-use

Amendments build on previous amendments for mixed-use.

Reducing the parking ratios for multi-family and mixed-use with access to transit.

Amendments create flexibility in meeting the open space requirements of the Zoning Bylaw for multi-family and mixed-use.



Relation to Master Plan

Master Plan Goals (p.77)

- Encourage mixed-use development that includes affordable housing, primarily in well-established commercial areas.
- Provide a variety of housing options for a range of incomes, ages, family sizes, and needs.
- Preserve the “streetcar suburb” character of Arlington’s residential neighborhoods.
- Encourage sustainable construction and renovation of new and existing structures.



How Amendments Address

Amendments focused on development in zoning districts on commercial corridors; affordability included with 6+ units.

Amendments seek to increase diversity of housing stock.

Amendments do not affect low-density residential zoning districts.

Amendments encourage investment in older, inefficient buildings.



Relation to Master Plan Zoning Audit

Master Plan Zoning Audit (Appendix I)

- Setbacks and other dimensional and design standards should be adjusted to facilitate infill development. The suburban standards in the ZBL may be appropriate for lower density residential and neighborhood business areas, but they are poorly suited for infill and mixed-use areas.
- The Town's off-street parking regulations need to be overhauled and modernized to address current trends in land use, economic development, and transportation planning.



How Amendments Address

Amendments adjust setbacks and dimensional standards that are appropriate for the higher-density residential districts and business districts.

The reduction in the number of spaces per unit for multi-family uses reflects the fact that these uses are located on major corridors where transit is accessible and the corresponding lack of demand for additional parking.



Housing Production Plan Feedback

- Mixed-use developments and neighborhoods: Amend zoning to allow apartments over businesses, encourage housing development around business districts, and create small houses and developments on infill parcels
- Most groups favored creating mixed-use developments or updating zoning by-laws to allow construction of apartments over shops and businesses.
- Participants expressed a desire to maintain the walkability of Arlington and to create “villages” throughout the Town so that all residents could enjoy that walkability and proximity to shops and businesses.

Summary of Results: Arlington Public Forum (2/2/16)



Housing Production Plan Feedback

- Housing development should be concentrated along public transportation routes providing residents access to business districts.
- The mandate to provide more than necessary parking per unit of housing reduces the already limited amount of developable land in Arlington.
- Allow shared parking and reduce parking requirement per unit of housing.

Summary of Results: Arlington Public Forum (2/2/16)



ARB Public Hearing, March 18, 2019

Behind the curve in production leading to higher housing costs

ONE IN THREE HOUSEHOLDS SPEND MORE THAN 30% OF THEIR INCOME ON HOUSING.



5,655 households¹

30% of all households

(Middle-income & low-income households alike spend a large portion of their income on housing.)



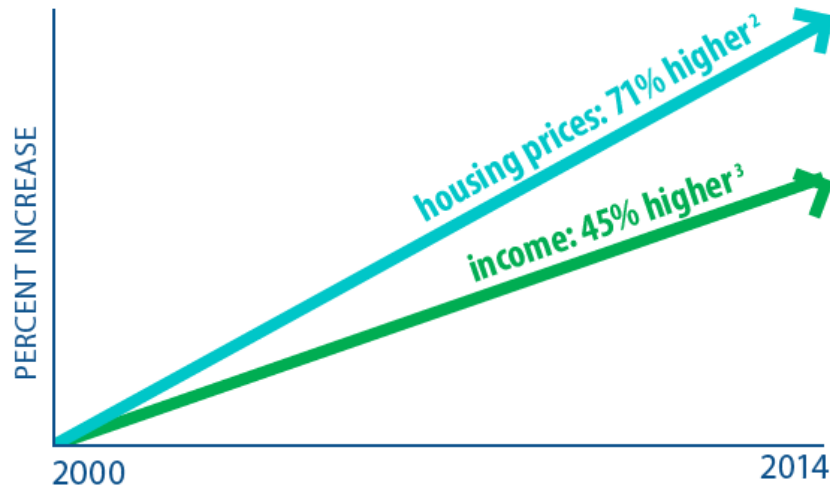
LOW-INCOME SENIORS SPEND AN EVEN HIGHER PROPORTION OF THEIR INCOME ON HOUSING.



972 low-income senior households (37% of all low-income seniors) spend more than **50%** of their income on housing costs.¹



SALE PRICES ROSE FASTER THAN INCOME.



Buying a house is too expensive for current residents.²

sale price affordable to a median income household in Arlington is about \$310,000, but the median sale price of homes in Arlington was \$580,000 in 2015.

MORE THAN ONE IN FOUR HOUSEHOLDS HAVE LOW INCOMES.



5,170 households have low incomes¹

27% of all households

Low income varies by household size. For a household of 2, low income is \$54,200. This is the most common household size in Arlington.



Supporting Sustainability Goals

- Amendments contribute to mitigating and adapting to climate change:
 - Compact built environment reduces emissions from vehicular use.
 - Focuses growth where development and infrastructure already exists.
 - Puts homes, jobs, stores, schools, and other destinations close to each other for easy access.



Articles 10, 11, 12

- Upper Story Building Step Backs
 - Adjusted to be consistent with the increase in height limits for mixed-use and multi-family uses
 - Proportionally appropriate for wide streets.
- Height Buffer
 - The buffer continues to provide a reasonable degree of relief for nearby residential, but will not effectively lower the allowable height across an entire property.
- Corner Lots
 - Aligns with frontage required in the district where parcel is located rather than adjacent parcels.



Article 10: Upper-Story Building Step Backs

To see if the Town will vote to amend the Zoning Bylaw to adjust the upper-story building step back beginning at the fourth story level or 40 feet above grade by amending SECTION 5.3.17. UPPER-STORY BUILDING STEP BACKS and by amending SECTION 5.3.21. SUPPLEMENTAL REQUIREMENTS IN THE BUSINESS AND INDUSTRIAL DISTRICTS paragraph C to refer to four stories; or take any action related thereto.



Article 11: Reduced Height Buffer Area

To see if the Town will vote to amend the Zoning Bylaw to reduce the height buffer area to 25 to 50 feet depending on orientation and to identify the specific requirements to allow application of the higher height limit by amending SECTION 5.3.19. REDUCED HEIGHT BUFFER AREA; or take any action related thereto.



Article 12: Corner Lot Requirements

To see if the Town will vote to amend the Zoning Bylaw to add a requirement for corner lots in the R4 through R7 Districts and all Business Districts which requires the minimum street yard to be equal to the front yard depth required by amending SECTION 5.3.8. CORNER LOTS AND THROUGH LOTS; or take any action related thereto.



Parking Demand

- If you build it, they will come!
- Oversupply of parking reduces other land uses
- Average lot is about 74% full
- Job accessibility by transit within 30 minutes reduces parking demand
- Establishes a minimum, based on market factors, more parking can be built



Parking Demand

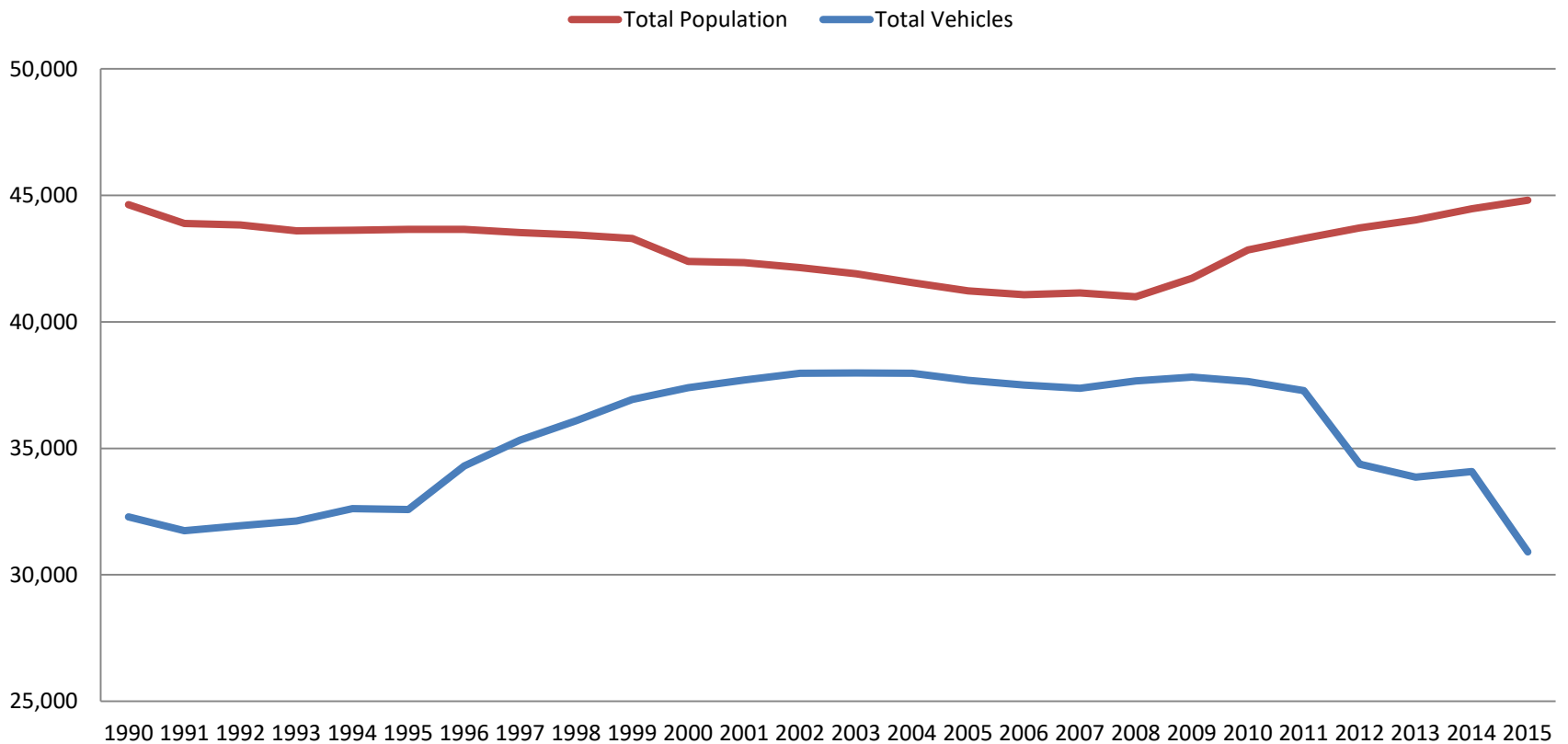
Address	Yr. Built	Parking* Utilization	Excess Parking
4105 Symmes Ct.	2013	0.69	0.7
30-50 Mill St.	2012	0.8	0.17
438 Mass. Ave.	2000	0.85	0.17
924-932 Mass. Ave.	1950	0.92	0
204 Mass. Ave.	1915	0.8	0.04
258-260 Mass. Ave.	1910	0.63	0.35

* Number of spaces



Vehicle Ownership

Population and Vehicle Registrations in Arlington, MA
1990-2015

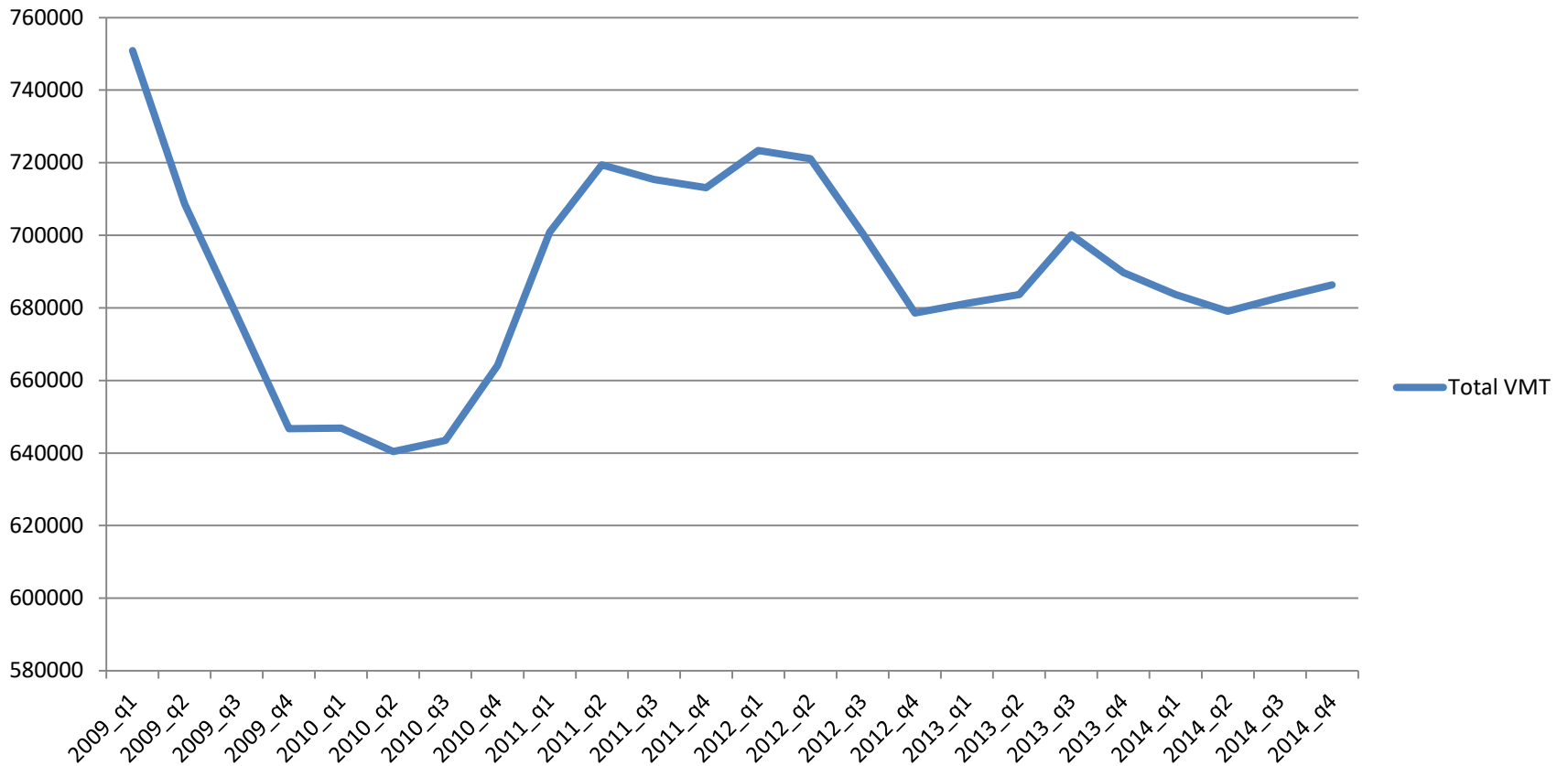


Source: MA Division of Local Services:
<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/socioeconomic-data>



Vehicle Miles Traveled

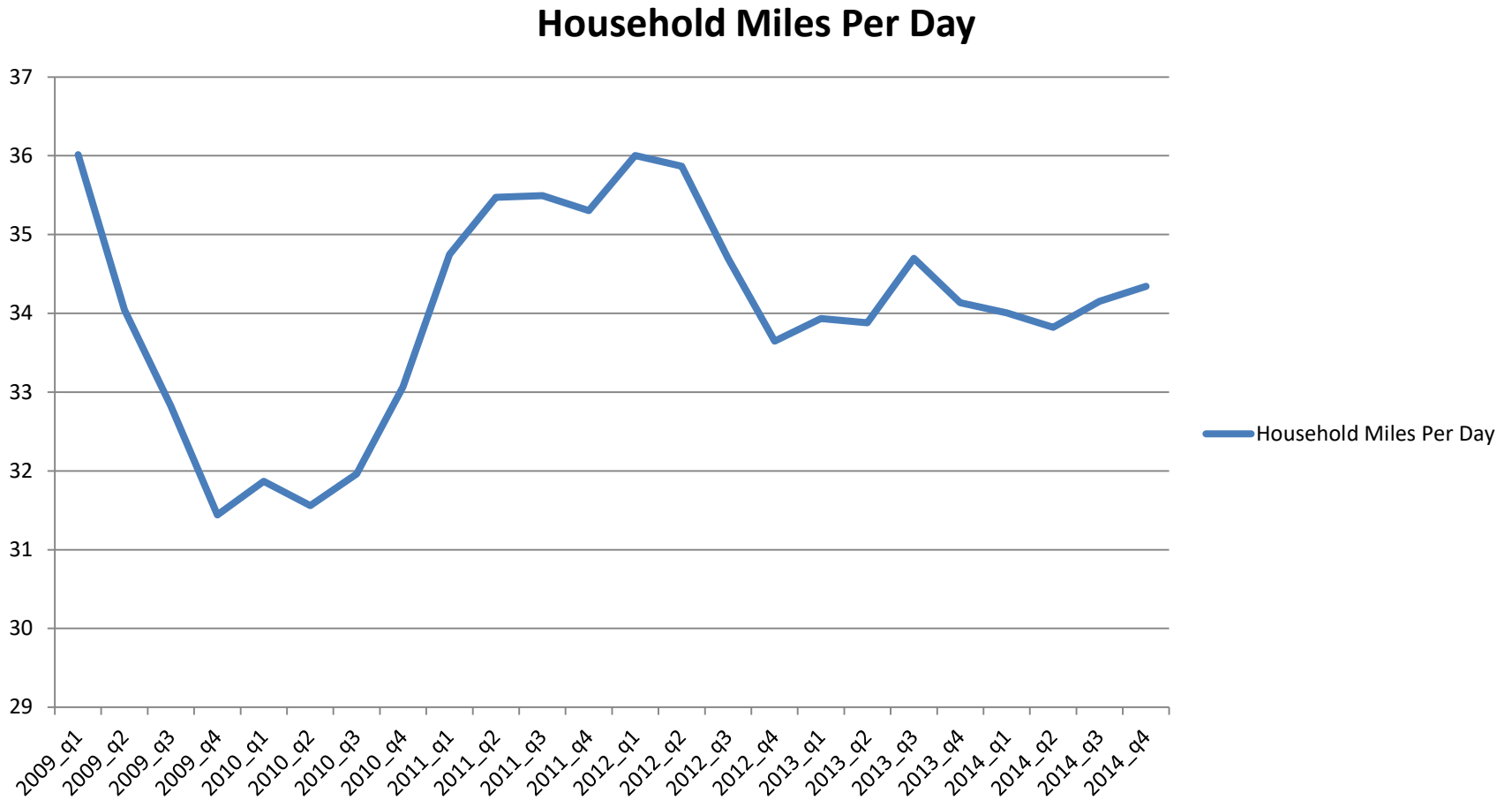
Total VMT



Source: MAPC; Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles (RMV)



Household Miles per Day



Source: MAPC; Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles (RMV)



Article 13: Apartment Building Parking Requirements

To see if the Town will vote to amend the Zoning Bylaw to reduce the parking requirements for apartment buildings by amending SECTION 6.1.4. TABLE OF OFF-STREET PARKING REGULATIONS to reduce the minimum number of spaces to 1 space per dwelling unit; or take any action related thereto.



Article 14: Parking Reduction Applicability

To see if the Town will vote to amend the Zoning Bylaw to include the R7 District in SECTION 6.1.5. PARKING REDUCTION IN BUSINESS, INDUSTRIAL, AND MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL ZONES; or take any action related thereto.



Bicycle Parking

- Master Plan recommends “Strengthen[ing] bicycle parking regulations in and adjacent to business districts and multi-family development.” (p. 172)
- Current standards are tied to motor vehicle parking
- Net effect is very little bicycle parking created
- Goal of amendment is to decouple bicycle parking from motor vehicle parking



Bicycle Parking

- Establishes standards for long-term and short-term bicycle parking
- Establishes general requirements and location standards
- Allows modification of the standards by the ARB or ZBA



Article 21: Bicycle Parking

To see if the Town will vote to amend the Zoning Bylaw to update the bicycle parking standards by amending SECTION 6.1.12. BICYCLE PARKING to remove and replace the section in its entirety; or take any action related thereto.

